

Facility Inspections

(For inspections conducted prior to October 2009)

The Harford County Health Department conducts inspections of all food service establishments in the county to ensure compliance with Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.15.03. Restaurants, grocery stores, mobile units, snowball stands, concession stands, camps, nursing home facilities, etc. are inspected by [environmental health sanitarians](#). Inspections evaluate procedures and practices which may negatively impact food preparation or service. There are three types of routine food service facility inspections – hazard analysis, monitoring and environmental.

Hazard analysis inspections are conducted in high and moderate [priority](#) facilities to evaluate food handling procedures. Hazard analysis inspections allow the sanitarian to verify that procedures used to handle a specific food item complies with the approved Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point ([HACCP](#)) plan and validates the HACCP plan's adequacy to produce safe food. This inspection is always scheduled and serves as an ideal training opportunity for facility staff.

Monitoring inspections are conducted in high and moderate priority facilities to determine a facility's compliance with critical food handling procedures. Any noted [critical item violations](#) must be corrected immediately or the facility must close until the violation is corrected.

Environmental inspections are conducted in high, moderate and low priority facilities. The environmental inspection is the most comprehensive inspection. It evaluates the facility's general maintenance and cleanliness, equipment design, construction, and repair, employee food handling procedures, as well as food and equipment temperatures.

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The Harford County Health Department inspects restaurants and other food service facilities to routinely monitor food handling practices, and sanitary and physical conditions. Depending on the type of food service offered by the facility, [routine random inspections](#) are conducted up to three times a year. Complaints and food borne illness outbreak investigations prompt additional inspections.

Inspectors ([environmental sanitarians](#)) closely evaluate eight critical food safety items which most often contribute to foodborne illness. If a critical food safety violation is discovered, it must be corrected immediately or the facility is closed until the violation is corrected. The **critical food safety inspection items** are as follows:

1. Food must be obtained from an approved source.
2. Food must be protected from contamination, spoilage and adulteration.
3. Food workers must practice effective hand washing; must be restricted during illness or infection.
4. Food must be properly cooled.
5. Food must be held at proper hot and cold temperatures.
6. Food must be adequately cooked and reheated.
7. Potable hot and cold running water must be provided.
8. Sewage disposal system must function properly.

In addition to the above critical items, environmental sanitarians also evaluate food service facilities for general food handling and facility maintenance, or **sanitation items**. Sanitarian violations, generally speaking, do not carry the same risk to the patron as critical items.

Facilities found in violation of sanitation items are not routinely closed. Instead, compliance within 30 days, or within a timeframe specified in a written compliance schedule, is required. A reinspection is typically scheduled to verify that corrections have been made.

Currently, the Harford County Health Department licenses and inspects a total of 1,893 food service facilities (936 permanent food service facilities and 957 temporary food service facilities). The following table lists inspection activity of permanent facilities by Department sanitarians from October 1, 2007 to October 31, 2007.

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Reading the Inspection Report

(For reports prior to Oct 2009)

Column 1	Facility Name & Address
Column 2	Inspection Date
Column 3	Inspection Type
Column 4	<p>Critical Violations Noted</p> <p>Critical food safety items found NOT in compliance. Any critical items found to be in violation must be corrected during the inspection. Numbers appearing in this column indicate the food safety item found in violation.</p> <p>These numbers correspond to the following critical items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Food must be obtained from an approved source.2. Food must be protected from contamination, spoilage and adulteration.3. Food workers must practice effective hand washing; must be restricted during illness or infection.4. Food must be properly cooled.5. Food must be held at proper temperature.6. Food must be adequately cooked and reheated.7. Potable hot and cold running water must be available.8. Sewage disposal system must function properly.
Column 5	Reinspection is indicated (Yes) if a follow-up inspection is required to assure corrective action on non-critical violations and continued compliance on critical item violations.